

it supplies of the most ancient Hindu system of religious worship and social organization 5 and, unless its language be preserved as far as may be consistent with intelligibility, erroneous impressions of the facts and opinions of primitive Hinduism may be produced.

It is, also, to be observed,, that M. Langlois has made his translation from manuscript copies of the *Veda* and its commentary, which, whilst it has greatly enhanced the difficulty and labour of the task, and, so far, adds to the credit of the translator, suggests less confidence in the genuineness of the original—as the manuscripts are, all, more or less defective.—than if the version had been made from a carefully collated edition. The present translation possesses, at least, the advantage, over its predecessors, of an accurate text; and it will be the fault of the translator, if he does not benefit by it. In converting the original into English, it has been hfs aim to adhere as strictly to the original Sanskrit as the necessity of being intelligible would allow.

It may be almost superfluous to apprise the reader, that the oldest, and, nominally, the most weighty, authorities of the Brahmans, for their

religion and institutions, are the *Vedas*, of which works four are usually enumerated: the *Rick*, or *Rig- Veda*; the *lajush*) or *Yajur- Veda*; the *S&m&n*, or *Sdma-Veda*; and the *Atharvana* ^ or *Atharva- Veda*. Many passages are to be found in Sanskrit writings, some in the *Vedas* themselves, which limit the number to three ;^a

^a Colebrooke on the *Vedas*.—Asiatic Researches, Yol. viii., p. 370: